House Study Bill 112

SENATE/HOUSE FILE ______
BY (PROPOSED DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BILL)

Passed	Senate,	Date	Passed	House,	Date	
Vote:	Ayes	Nays	Vote:	Ayes _	Nays	
Approved						

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to workers' compensation liability insurance, and providing for civil penalties

2 providing for civil penalties. 3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

4 TLSB 1208DP 81

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Section 1. Section 22.7, Code 2005, is amended by adding
   2 the following new subsection:
3    NEW SUBSECTION. 51. A report of issuance or cancellation
   4 of a policy of workers' compensation liability insurance made
     pursuant to section 87.1, subsection 4.
Sec. 2. Section 85.1, subsection 6, Code 2005, is amended
      Sec. 2. Section to read as follows:
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          6. Employers may with respect to an employee or a
   9 classification of employees exempt from coverage provided by
1 10 this chapter pursuant to subsection 1, 2, or 3, \frac{4}{4}, or 5, other 1 11 than the employee or classification of employees with respect
1 12 to whom a rule of liability or a method of compensation is 1 13 established by the Congress of the United States, assume a
1 14 liability for compensation imposed upon employers by this
1 15 chapter, for the benefit of employees within the coverage of
1 16 this chapter, by the purchase of valid workers' compensation 1 17 insurance specifically including that does not exclude the
1 18 employee or classification of employees. The purchase of and
1 19 acceptance by an employer of valid workers' compensation
1 20 insurance applicable to the employee or classification of
1 21 employees constitutes an assumption by the employer of
  22 liability without any further act on the part of the employer, 23 but only with respect to the employee or classification of
1 24 employees as are within the coverage of the workers'
1 25 compensation insurance contract and only for the time period
  26 in which the insurance contract is in force. Upon an election
  27 of such coverage, the employee or classification of employees
1 28 shall accept compensation in the manner provided by this
  29 chapter and the employer shall be relieved from any other
  30 liability for recovery of damage, or other compensation for
1 31 injury.
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                     Section 85.61, subsection 2, Code 2005, is amended
          Sec. 3.
  33 by adding the following new unnumbered paragraph:
          NEW UNNUMBERED PARAGRAPH. "Employer" includes a person who
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  35 contracts with a contractor to perform an activity that is a
   1 regular part of the person's trade or business and such person 2 is liable for the payment of benefits pursuant to the
   3 provisions of this chapter, chapters 85A, 85B, and 86, as to
   4 any and all personal injuries sustained by the employees of 5 the contractor arising out of and in the course of performance 6 of the contract with the person, if the contractor has failed
   7 to insure the contractor's workers' compensation liability or
   8 to obtain relief from insurance as provided in chapter 87. A
   9 person who pays benefits pursuant to this paragraph is
2 10 considered to be the employer for purposes of the exclusive
2 11 remedy provisions of sections 85.3 and 85.20, and for purpose 2 12 of the subrogation and indemnity provisions of section 85.22.
  11 remedy provisions of sections 85.3 and 85.20, and for purposes
2 13 A person who pays benefits to the employees of a contractor
2 14 pursuant to this paragraph is entitled to be indemnified by
2 15 the contractor with interest. A person shall not be charged a 2 16 premium for workers' compensation insurance for coverage of a
2 17 contractor's employees if the person holds a current
2 18 certificate of insurance or self=insurance showing that the
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2 19 contractor with whom the person has a contract, is in 2 20 compliance with chapter 87. 2 21 Sec. 2 22 follows: Sec. 4. Section 87.1, Code 2005, is amended to read as 2 23 87.1 INSURANCE OF LIABILITY REQUIRED. 24 <u>1.</u> Every employer subject to the provisions of this and 25 chapters 85, 85A, 85B, and 86, unless relieved therefrom as 26 hereinafter provided, shall insure the employer's liability 2 27 thereunder in some corporation, association, or organization 2 28 approved by the commissioner of insurance. 2. A motor carrier who contracts with an owner-operator 2 30 who is acting as an independent contractor pursuant to section 31 85.61, subsection 13, shall not be required to insure the 32 motor carrier's liability for the owner-operator. A motor 33 carrier may procure compensation liability insurance coverage 34 for these owner-operators, and may charge the owner-operator 35 for the costs of the premiums. A motor carrier shall require 1 the owner-operator to provide and maintain a certificate of 2 workers' compensation insurance covering the owner-operator's 3 3 employees. An owner=operator shall remain responsible for 4 providing compensation liability insurance for the owner= 5 operator's employees. 3 3. Every such employer shall exhibit, on demand of the 7 workers' compensation commissioner, evidence of the employer's 8 compliance with this section; and if such employer refuses, or 3 9 neglects to comply with this section, the employer shall be 10 liable in case of injury to any worker in the employer's 11 employ under the common law as modified by statute. 3 4. a. Every insurer that issues a policy of workers' 3 12 13 compensation liability insurance providing coverage required 14 by this section shall, within thirty days after issuance and 15 after subsequent cancellation of the policy, report such 3 16 issuance or cancellation to the workers' compensation 17 commissioner or to the commissioner's designee in the manner 18 prescribed by the commissioner by rule. Such report shall 19 include the name and address of the insured employer; the name 20 and address of the insurer that issued the policy; the 21 effective date of the policy; the effective date of the 22 cancellation, if applicable; any deductible included in the 23 policy; and such other information as the commissioner 24 requires by rule. Notwithstanding chapter 22, a report of issuance 26 cancellation of a policy of workers' compensation liability 27 insurance made pursuant to this subsection shall be kept 28 confidential and is not subject to public examination or 29 copying. The workers' compensation commissioner or the 30 commissioner's designee may publicly disclose information contained in such a report to persons other than the insured, 32 the insurer, and persons servicing the policy, except that 33 information relating to experience, payroll, loss data, the 34 expiration date of the policy, and classification information <u>35 shall not be publicly disclosed except as is reasonably</u> 1 necessary in the course of a regulatory investigation or 2 enforcement action. c. The absence of a report showing that a policy of 4 workers' compensation liability insurance was issued to an <u>5 employer and was in effect on a particular date creates a</u> 6 rebuttable presumption that such a policy was not issued or in 7 effect on that date. d. If an insurer fails to report the issuance or 9 cancellation of a policy of workers' compensation liability 10 insurance in the time and manner required by this subsection 11 and by rule, the workers' compensation commissioner may assess 12 a civil penalty against the insurer in the amount of one 4 13 hundred dollars for each failure to report. The commissioner 4 14 may increase the civil penalty against the insurer to one 4 15 thousand dollars for each failure to report if such failure is 16 discovered in the course of a contested case proceeding that 17 was filed against an employer because the employer appeared to 4 18 be uninsured due to the absence of a report by the insurer 19 showing that a policy of workers' compensation liability 20 insurance was in effect for the employer.
21 Sec. 5. <u>NEW SECTION</u>. 87.2A PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO 4 21

4 22 INSURE.
4 23 The workers' compensation commissioner may assess a civil
4 24 penalty against any employer who is required by this chapter
4 25 to purchase workers' compensation insurance or to qualify for
4 26 relief from such insurance and fails to do so. The amount of
4 27 the penalty shall be an amount equal to one hundred percent of
4 28 the employer's workers' compensation insurance premium for the
4 29 year for which the penalty is assessed, as determined by the

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4 30 commissioner of insurance. In computing the premium, it shall
4 31 be conclusively presumed that the highest number of employees
4 32 employed by the employer at any time during that year were
  33 employed throughout the entire year, that all employees earned
  34 the statewide average weekly wage throughout the entire year,
  35 and that all employees were in the classification carrying the
    1 highest premium rate that existed in the employer's workforce
      during that year. After deducting expenses, including
    3 attorney fees, incurred in collecting the penalties assessed,
      fifty percent of all penalties collected shall be deposited in
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      the general fund of the state and the remaining fifty percent
      of the penalties collected shall be deposited in the second
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      injury fund.
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          Sec. 6.
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                      Section 87.8, Code 2005, is amended to read as
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      follows:
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          87.8
                 INSOLVENCY CLAUSE PROHIBITED.
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          {\color{red} {No}} {\color{blue} {\underline{A}}} policy of insurance issued under this chapter shall
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      not contain any provision relieving the insurer from payment
      if the insured becomes insolvent or discharged in bankruptcy
5 14 during the period that the policy is in operation, or the
  15 compensation, or any part of it, is unpaid, notwithstanding 16 any deductible contained in the policy.
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          Sec. 7. Section 87.11, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2005,
5 18 is amended to read as follows:
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          When an employer coming under this chapter furnishes
5 20 satisfactory proofs to the insurance commissioner of such
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  21 employer's solvency and financial ability to pay the
  22 compensation and benefits as by law provided and to make such
5 23 payments to the parties when entitled thereto, or when such
5 24 employer deposits with the insurance commissioner security
  25 satisfactory to the insurance commissioner and the workers'
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  26 compensation commissioner as guaranty for the payment of such
5 27 compensation, such employer shall be relieved of the 5 28 provisions of this chapter requiring insurance; but such
5 29 employer shall, from time to time, furnish such additional
5 30 proof of solvency and financial ability to pay as may be
5 31 required by such insurance commissioner or workers'
  32 compensation commissioner. Such security shall be held in 33 trust for the sole purpose of paying compensation and benefits
  34 and is not subject to attachment, levy, execution,
35 garnishment, liens, or any other form of encumbrance. A
1 political subdivision, including a city, county, community
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   2 college, or school corporation, that is self=insured for 3 workers' compensation is not required to submit a plan or 4 program to the insurance commissioner for review and approval.
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                      Section 87.11, unnumbered paragraph 3, Code 2005,
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          Sec. 8.
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    6 is amended to read as follows:
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          If an employer becomes insolvent and a debtor under 11
   8 U.S.C., on or after January 1, 1990, or ceases doing business.
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  9 this paragraph applies. The <del>commissioner of</del> insurance
10 <u>commissioner</u> may request of the workers' compensation
11 commissioner that all future payments of workers' compensation
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6 12 weekly benefits, medical expenses, or other payments pursuant 6 13 to chapter 85, 85A, 85B, 86, or 87 be commuted to a present 6 14 lump sum. The workers' compensation commissioner shall fix
6 15 the lump sum of probable future medical expenses and weekly
6 16 compensation benefits, or other benefits payable pursuant to 6 17 chapter 85, 85A, 85B, 86, or 87, capitalized at their present 6 18 value upon the basis of interest at the rate provided in
6 19 section 535.3 for court judgments and decrees. If an employer
  20 ceases doing business without becoming insolvent, the 21 insurance commissioner shall publish notice of the time and
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  22 manner for filing claims against the employer in a newspaper
6 23 of general circulation in the county or counties within this
  24 state where the employer is known to have maintained a place
  25 of business. The notice shall be published in two series of
 26 publications. The first series of publications shall be 27 published once each week for three consecutive weeks as soon 28 as reasonably practical after the date that the insurance
6 29 commissioner becomes aware that the employer has ceased doing
  30 business. The second series of publications shall be
   31 published once each week for three consecutive weeks within
  32 the period of one year before the time for filing claims
  33 expires. Defects in the notice or publication shall not
   34 affect the period for filing claims against the employer or 35 give rise to a claim against the insurance commissioner. A
   1 claims that are not otherwise barred shall become barred if
      not filed within five years after the date the employer ceased
    3 doing business, as determined by the insurance commissioner,
    4 including claims for review reopening, benefits under section
      85.27, and latent injuries. The insurance commissioner of
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insurance shall be discharged from all further liability for 7 the commuted workers' compensation claim upon payment of the 8 present lump sum to either the claimant, or a licensed insurer for purchase of an annuity or other periodic payment plan for 7 10 the benefit of the claimant. 7 11 Section 87.14A, Code 2005, is amended to read as 7 12 follows: 7 13 INSURANCE OR BOND REQUIRED. 87.14A An employer subject to this chapter and chapters 85, 85A, 7 15 85B, and 86 shall not engage in business without first 7 16 obtaining insurance covering compensation benefits or 7 17 obtaining relief from insurance as provided in this chapter or 18 furnishing a bond pursuant to section 87.16. A person who 7 19 willfully and knowingly violates this section is guilty of a 7 20 class "D" felony. Sec. 10. Section 87.19, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2005, 22 is amended to read as follows: 7 23 Upon the receipt of information by the workers' 7 24 compensation commissioner of any employer failing to comply 25 with sections 87.16 and 87.17 section 87.14A, the commissioner 7 26 shall at once notify such employer by certified mail that 7 27 unless such employer comply with the requirements of law, 7 28 legal proceedings will be instituted to enforce such 29 compliance. 7 Section 87.20, Code 2005, is amended to read as 30 Sec. 11. 7 31 follows: 32 87.20 REVOCATION OF RELEASE FROM INSURANCE. 7 33 The insurance commissioner with the concurrence of the workers' compensation commissioner may, at any time, upon 35 reasonable notice to such employer and upon hearing, revoke for cause any order theretofore made relieving any employer from carrying insurance as provided by this chapter. 8 Sec. 12. <u>NEW SECTION</u>. 87.25 ENFORCEMENT PROCEEDINGS. 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 17A.11 and 8 17A.17, subsection 8, the workers' compensation commissioner 8 6 or a deputy workers' compensation commissioner may preside 8 8 7 over any contested case proceeding brought under this chapter. 8 8 2. In any action brought for the purpose of assessing a 8 9 civil penalty pursuant to this chapter, official notice shall 8 10 be taken of the records of the workers' compensation 11 commissioner. A statement from the insurance commissioner 8 8 12 that an employer has not obtained relief from insurance 8 13 pursuant to this chapter is presumed to be accurate. 8 14 3. The workers' compensation commissioner may petition any 8 15 court of competent jurisdiction for an entry of judgment on 8 16 any order assessing a civil penalty imposed pursuant to this 8 17 chapter. A court shall enter judgment for the unpaid portion 8 18 of the civil penalty assessed, upon a verified statement by 8 19 the workers' compensation commissioner that a civil penalty 8 20 was assessed and the amount of the penalty that remains 8 21 unpaid. A fee shall not be charged to the workers 22 compensation commissioner for filing a petition, return of 8 8 23 service, entry of judgment, or issuance of execution on a 8 24 judgment. The costs of an action brought pursuant to this 8 25 subsection may be assessed against the defendant. The she 8 26 of any county in this state shall execute upon property to 8 27 enforce the judgment without payment of fees in advance. 4. If so requested by the workers' compensation commissioner or the treasurer of state, the attorney general 8 8 8 30 or a county attorney of any county in this state shall assist 8 31 the workers' compensation commissioner in the collection of 8 32 penalties assessed. In addition, the workers' compensation 33 commissioner may contract with one or more attorneys licensed 8 34 in this state, to obtain and enforce judgments and subrogation 8 35 and indemnity rights on behalf of the workers' compensation commissioner and to pay for the contracted services from the 9 2 penalties collected. 9 Sec. 13. Sections 87.16 and 87.17, Code 2005, are 9 4 repealed. 9 EXPLANATION 9 This bill contains various provisions relating to workers' 9 compensation liability insurance. The bill amends Code section 85.1 to provide that certain 9 9 persons are exempt from workers' compensation coverage, such 10 as police officers and fire fighters who are entitled to 11 benefits under Code chapters 410 and 411, and certain officers 9 12 of a corporation other than a family farm corporation who 13 voluntarily reject workers' compensation coverage. 14 section 85.1 is also amended to provide that an employer may 15 assume liability for certain exempt employees by purchasing 9 16 workers' compensation insurance that does not exclude such

9 17 employees. Previously, such employees were covered only if 9 18 the workers' compensation insurance policy specifically 9 19 included them in the coverage.

9 20 The bill amends Code section 85.61, subsection 2, to 9 21 provide that a person who contracts with a contractor to 22 perform an activity that is a regular part of the person's 23 trade or business is liable as an employer for the payment of 24 workers' compensation benefits for personal injuries sustained 25 by the employees of the contractor while performing the 26 contract with the person, if the contractor has failed to 27 insure the contractor's workers' compensation liability or to 28 obtain relief from workers' compensation liability as provided 9 29 in Code chapter 87. A person who pays benefits pursuant to 30 this provision is considered to be the employer for purposes 31 of the exclusive remedy provisions and for purposes of 32 subrogation and indemnity provisions. A person who pays 33 benefits to the employees of a contractor is entitled to be 34 indemnified by the contractor with interest and shall not be 35 charged a premium for workers' compensation insurance coverage 10 for a contractor's employees if the person holds a current certificate of insurance or self=insurance showing that the 10 10 contractor is in compliance with Code chapter 87. 10

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Code section 87.1 adds a new provision requiring every 5 insurer that issues workers' compensation liability insurance 6 policies to file a report with the workers' compensation commissioner within 30 days of the issuance or cancellation of 8 such a policy. The bill requires the reports to be kept 10 9 confidential, notwithstanding the public records law in Code 10 10 chapter 22. The workers' compensation commissioner may 10 11 publicly disclose some information contained in the reports 10 12 except that information relating to experience, payroll, loss 10 13 data, the policy's expiration date, or classification shall 10 14 not be disclosed unless the disclosure of that information is 10 15 reasonably necessary in the course of a regulatory 10 16 investigation or enforcement action. The bill also provides 10 17 that the absence of such a report creates a rebuttable 10 18 presumption that a policy of workers' compensation insurance 10 19 was not issued to an employer or was not in effect on a 10 20 particular date.

An insurer who fails to report the issuance or cancellation 10 22 of a workers' compensation insurance policy as required by the 10 23 provision may be assessed a civil penalty by the workers 10 24 compensation commissioner in the amount of \$100 for each 10 25 failure to report and \$1,000 for each failure to report if 10 26 such failure is discovered in the course of a contested case 10 27 proceeding that was filed against an employer because the 10 28 employer appeared to be uninsured due to the absence of the 10 29 report.

The bill creates a new Code section 87.2A allowing the 10 31 workers' compensation commissioner to assess a civil penalty 10 32 against any employer who is required by Code chapter 87 to 10 33 purchase workers' compensation insurance or to qualify for 10 34 relief from such insurance and fails to do so. The bill 10 35 provides that the penalty assessed shall be an amount equal to 100 percent of the employer's workers' compensation premium 2 for the year for which the penalty is assessed, as determined 3 by the commissioner of insurance, and that in computing the 4 premium it shall be conclusively presumed that the highest 5 number of employees employed by the employer at any time 6 during that year were employed throughout the entire year, that all employees earned the statewide average weekly wage throughout the entire year, and that all employees were in the 9 classification carrying the highest premium rate that existed 11 10 in the employer's workforce during that year. The bill 11 11 further provides that after deducting the expenses, including 11 12 attorney fees, incurred in collecting the penalties assessed, 11 13 50 percent of all penalties collected shall be deposited in 11 14 the state general fund and the remaining 50 percent shall be 11 15 deposited in the second injury fund.

Code section 87.8 is amended to provide that a policy of 11 16 11 17 workers' compensation liability insurance shall not contain a 11 18 provision relieving the insurer from liability if the insured 11 19 becomes insolvent or bankrupt even if the policy contains a 11 20 deductible.

21 Code section 87.11 is amended to provide that the amount of 11 22 security deposited by a self-insured employer shall be 11 23 determined by the insurance commissioner and not the workers' 11 24 compensation commissioner and that the security is held in 25 trust for the sole purpose of paying compensation and benefits 11 11 26 and is not subject to attachment, levy, execution, 11 27 garnishment, liens, or any other form of encumbrance.

11 28 bill also provides that proof of solvency shall be given to 11 29 the insurance commissioner, not the workers' compensation 11 30 commissioner.

Code section 87.11 is also amended to provide that if a 11 32 self=insured employer ceases doing business without becoming 11 33 insolvent, the insurance commissioner shall publish notice of 34 the time and manner for filing claims against the employer as 35 specified in the bill. Defects in the notice or publication 1 do not affect the period for filing claims against the 2 employer or give rise to claims against the insurance commissioner and certain claims not otherwise barred become 4 barred if not filed within five years after the date the 5 employer ceased doing business, as determined by the insurance 6 commissioner.

The bill repeals Code section 87.16, which requires an 8 employer who has failed to carry workers' compensation insurance or to obtain relief from carrying such insurance, to 12 10 furnish a bond approved by the workers' compensation 12 11 commissioner. Code section 87.14A is amended to remove the 12 12 reference to the bonding requirements contained in Code 12 13 section 87.16. The bill also repeals Code section 86.17, 12 14 which requires an employer to post a notice stating the nature 12 15 of the security furnished in lieu of insurance to secure

12 16 workers' compensation payments.
12 17 Code section 87.19 is amended to provide that an employer 12 18 that fails to comply with the provisions of Code chapters 85, 12 19 85A, 85B, 86, and 87, as set forth in Code section 87.14A, may 12 20 be subject to enforcement proceedings.

12 21 The bill amends Code section 87.20 to provide that the 12 22 insurance commissioner may revoke, for cause, an order 12 23 relieving an employer from carrying insurance as required by 12 24 Code chapter 87 without the concurrence of the workers' 12 25 compensation commissioner.

12 26 The bill adds a new Code section 87.25 concerning 12 27 enforcement proceedings. The bill gives the workers' 12 28 compensation commissioner or a deputy the authority to preside 12 29 over any contested case brought under Code chapter 87, 12 30 notwithstanding Code sections 17A.11 and 17A.17, subsection 8.

The bill provides that in an action brought for the purpose 12 32 of assessing a civil penalty, official notice shall be taken 12 33 of the workers' compensation commission's records. A
12 34 statement from the insurance commissioner that an employer has 12 35 not obtained relief from insurance pursuant to Code chapter 87 1 is presumed to be accurate.

The bill allows the workers' compensation commissioner to 3 petition any court of competent jurisdiction for an entry of 4 judgment on any order assessing a civil penalty. No fee can 5 be charged to the commissioner for filing a petition, return 6 of service, entry of judgment, or issuance of execution on a judgment, although the costs of an action brought under this 8 section may be assessed against the defendant employer. 9 sheriff of any county is required to execute upon property to 13 10 enforce a judgment received under this chapter without 13 11 prepayment of fees.

13 12 The bill requires the attorney general or a county attorney 13 13 of any county to assist the workers' compensation commissioner 13 14 in collecting penalties assessed, upon request of the 13 15 commissioner or the treasurer of state. In addition, the 13 16 workers' compensation commissioner has the authority to 13 17 contract with other attorneys licensed in Iowa to obtain and 13 18 enforce judgments and subrogation and indemnity rights on 13 19 behalf of the commissioner and to pay for the contracted

13 20 services from the penalties collected. 13 21 LSB 1208DP 81

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